

Message Text

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APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

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NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS, US, SY

SUBJECT: LEBANON

1. WHILE WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE LEBANESE SITUATION FROM TIME TO TIME WITH DINITZ AT THIS END, WE HAVE NOT GIVEN HIM A SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT OF DEAN BROWN'S ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE CONVEY TO ALLON, FROM ME, FOR HIS VERY RESTRICTED USE, THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO KEEP THE ISRAELIS UP TO DATE.

2. AMBASSADOR BROWN HAS HELD INTENSIVE ROUNDS OF TALKS WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PRINCIPAL LEBANESE FACTIONS, IN PARTICULAR THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS ON THE ONE SIDE AND JUMBLATT ON THE OTHER, BUT HE HAS ALSO SEEN MODERATE MOSLEM LEADERS. ASIDE FROM HEARING THE POINTS OF VIEW OF THE LEBANESE, HE HAS FOCUSED HIS ATTENTION ON TWO MAIN POINTS: THE NEED FOR ALL SIDES TO MAINTAIN THE

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CEASEFIRE AND TO BE FLEXIBLE IN REACHING THE POLITICAL

COMPROMISES THAT WILL BE NECESSARY IN THE NEXT WEEKS;
AND THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE ABSENCE OF ANY CENTRAL
SECURITY FORCE IN THE COUNTRY.

3. IN HIS FIRST TALK WITH FRANGIE, CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL,
HE FOUND THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS CONCERNED ABOUT THE MILITARY
SITUATION, ALTHOUGH THE CHRISTIAN MILITARY OFFICERS THEM-
SELVES COMMENTED MAINLY ON THE NEED
TO CONSERVE AMMUNITION. THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CLEARLY
FELT UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM JUMBLATT, AND
FRANGIE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT THE ESCALATING
DEMANDS OF THE DRUSE LEADER. THEY SAID THEY BELIEVED THE
LEFT-WING OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN
DIRECTED AGAINST THE INSTITUTION OF THE PRESIDENCY, WHICH
THE LEFTISTS WISHED TO DEMOLISH ALONG WITH OTHER ASPECTS
AND INSTITUTIONS OF LEBANESE LIFE. FRANGIE, IN A PRIVATE
CONVERSATION, SAID HE SAW NO PROBLEM IN AMENDING THE
CONSTITUTION AND ELECTING A NEW PRESIDENT IF THIS COULD
BE DONE FREE OF OUTSIDE PRESSURE. HE INDICATED HE WOULD
BE PREPARED TO RESIGN THEREAFTER.

4. IN A SUBSEQUENT SERIES OF MEETINGS WITH THE
CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP ON APRIL 5, AFTER HIS FIRST TALK
WITH JUMBLATT, BROWN TOLD THEM THAT THE DRUSE LEADER
SEEMED PREPARED TO EXTEND THE TRUCE IF THE POLITICAL
PROCESS WAS WELL UNDERWAY BUT HAD MADE NO SOLID GUARANTEE
FOR THE FUTURE. BROWN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING
FORWARD MOVEMENT. HE MADE CLEAR THAT THE U.S. IS DEEPLY
SYMPATHETIC TO THE SITUATION OF THE MARONITES AND THEIR
MILITARY DISADVANTAGE, THAT WE BELIEVE THEY MUST RETAIN
NECESSARY STRENGTH TO NEGOTIATE ARRANGEMENTS THAT WILL
ENSURE SECURITY OF THEIR COMMUNITY, BUT THAT HIS TALKS
HAD LED HIM TO BELIEVE THE BEST WAY FOR THEM TO MOVE
IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES WAS TO CARRY THROUGH THE GENERALLY
AGREED-UPON PLAN FOR POLITICAL REFORM PROMPTLY AND IN
GOOD FAITH. HE THEN TURNED TO THE SECURITY QUESTION,
PUTTING FORWARD AS HIS PERSONAL SUGGESTION THE IDEA OF
A JOINT FORCE WITH CHRISTIANS, PALESTINIANS, SAIQA AND
ARMY ELEMENTS TO PROVIDE SECURITY IN THE IMMEDIATE
FUTURE WHILE A NEW GOVERNMENT IS BEING FORMED AND THE
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NECESSARY POLITICAL AND OTHER CHANGES ARE BEING MADE.
FOR THE LONGER RUN HE SUGGESTED, ALSO PERSONALLY, AN
INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM, TO BE REQUESTED BY THE LEBANESE
GOVERNMENT, THAT WOULD HELP IN REBUILDING THE LEBANESE
ECONOMY AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE REESTABLISHMENT OF A
LEBANESE SECURITY FORCE.

5. GEMAYEL AND FRANGIE WERE QUITE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE

THE PHALANGE TO A JOINT SECURITY FORCE, GEMAYEL SAYING THIS COULD BE DONE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN-LEBANESE COMMISSION ARRANGEMENT. FRANGIE WAS LESS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF THE FORCE. BOTH AGREED WITH THE IDEA OF A CONSORTIUM FOR THE LONGER RUN FUTURE. GEMAYEL MADE THE POINT THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE FORCES OF OTHER COUNTRIES AND EMPHASIZED THAT SYRIA WOULD HAVE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS THROUGHOUT. CHAMOUN, ON THE OTHER HAND, DID NOT REACT FAVORABLY

TO THESE PERSONAL IDEAS OF BROWN'S. HE THOUGHT THAT SOME FORM OF CONFEDERATION WAS THE ONLY SOLUTION. BROWN TOLD HIM THAT IN HIS VIEW THE CONFEDERATION IDEA WAS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE ONE. CONFEDERATION AS CHAMOUN CONCEIVED IT MEANT ONLY PARTITION AND CONTINUING INSTABILITY, AND BROWN SAID HE BELIEVED THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS WOULD HAVE TO FIND THEIR SECURITY IN OTHER WAYS.

6. IN BROWN'S FIRST MEETING WITH JUMBLATT, THE DRUSE LEADER DESCRIBED HIS OBJECTIVES IN TERMS THAT WOULD REQUIRE MAJOR CHANGES IN THE LEBANESE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SYSTEM, GOING FAR BEYOND THE ARRANGEMENT WORKED OUT WITH SYRIAN ASSISTANCE IN JANUARY. JUMBLATT ALSO DID NOT RULE OUT A RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING IF HE DID NOT GET THE REFORMS HE SOUGHT. BROWN TOLD HIM FORCEFULLY THAT THE MAJOR CHANGES HE SOUGHT WERE UNREALISTIC IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND WARNED HIM OF THE DANGERS IF THE CEASEFIRE WERE NOT MAINTAINED AND A POLITICAL SOLUTION WERE NOT RAPIDLY ACHIEVED. BROWN IS CONTINUING TO MEET WITH JUMBLATT AND WE WILL LET THE ISRAELIS KNOW ABOUT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

7. THE SECRETARY WANTS ALLON TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SECRET

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CONTINUING TO PRESS THE SYRIANS NOT TO INTERVENE MILITARILY, WHILE INFORMING THEM OF OUR EFFORTS TO HELP BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION ALONG THE GENERAL LINES OF THE JANUARY SOLUTION.

IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE TAKEN SERIOUSLY THE WARNINGS WE HAVE CONVEYED TO THEM ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF INTERVENTION, DESPITE THE OBVIOUS PRESSURES THEY FEEL TO INTRODUCE ORDER INTO THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, AND HAVE CONDUCTED THE LIMITED AUGMENTATIONS OF SYRIAN CONTROLLED FORCES IN A WAY MOST CALCULATED TO AVOID PRESENTING THE ISRAELIS WITH A SITUATION IN WHICH THEY MIGHT REACT.

WE SHOULD ADD THAT IN HIS TALKS WITH THE LEBANESE LEADERS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE TOLD US OF THEIR HOPE FOR SYRIAN INTERVENTION, WE HAVE ALSO MADE CLEAR OUR

OPPOSITION TO THIS COURSE OF ACTION.

8. THE SECRETARY WANTS TO NOTE IN THIS CONNECTION THE REPORT THAT ALLON HAS DOUBTLESS RECEIVED (WE INFORMED DINITZ AND SUBSEQUENTLY MINISTER BAR-ON IMMEDIATELY ON RECEIVING THE REPORTS FRIDAY MORNING) ABOUT THE MOVEMENT OF SYRIAN TROOPS ACROSS TO THE LEBANESE SIDE OF THE BORDER ALONG THE DAMASCUS-BEIRUT ROAD. THE NUMBER OF TROOPS INVOLVED IS VARIOUSLY REPORTED AS FROM 700 TO 2,000. ACCORDING TO REPORTS WE HAVE SEEN THEY ARE LIGHTLY ARMED. THEY APPEARED AS OF EARLY

FRIDAY (WASHINGTON TIME) TO BE DIGGING IN NEAR THE CUSTOMS POST AT MASNA, AT THE FOOT OF THE HILLS ABOUT THREE KILOMETERS IN FROM THE FRONTIER ON THE LEBANESE SIDE, THOUGH SOME ELEMENTS WERE REPORTED TO BE MOVING ON ACROSS THE VALLEY. OUR INITIAL AND TENTATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE MOVE IS THAT THE SYRIANS ARE CONDUCTING A SHOW OF FORCE BY TAKING CONTROL OF THE PASS AND APPROACH AREAS TO MAKE MORE CREDIBLE THE PRESSURE THEY WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN ON THE LEFTISTS BASED ON THE THREAT OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION.

9. FINALLY, THE SECRETARY WISHES ALLON TO KNOW THAT WE FEEL THE ISRAELI REACTIONS TO THE LEBANESE CRISIS, WITH THEIR RESTRAINT, HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARD CONTROLLING
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THE SITUATION. THIS IS IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH OF US AND WE VERY MUCH HOPE ISRAELI ACTIONS WILL CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY TH

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